

FONTAINEBLEAU

A Story From the Memoirs of a Minister of

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN, of "A Gentleman of France," "My Lady Rotha," etc.

(Copyright, 1895, by Stanley J. Weyman.) In March, 1610, King Henry went, as usual, to Fontainebleau, where he diverted dimself with hunting. It was during this risit that the court credited him with seeing-I think, on the Friday before the feast of the Virgin-the Great Huntsman; and ven went so far as to specify the part of the forest in which he came upon it and the form—that of a gigantic black horseman, surrounded by hounds-which it assumed. The specter had not been seen since the year 1598; nevertheless, the story spread widely, those who whispered citing in its support not only the remarkable agitation into which the queen fell publicly on the evening of that day, but also some strange particulars that attended the king's return from the forest; and, being taken up and repeated, and confirmed, as many thought, by the unhappy sequence of his death, the fable found a little later almost universal credence, so that it may now be found even in books.

As it happened, however, I was that day at Fontainebleau, and hunted with the king; and, favored both by chance and the lence with which my master never confidence with which my master to refailed to honor me, am able not only to re-fute this story, but to narrate the actual facts from which it took its vise. And though there are some, I know, who boast that they had the tale from the king's own mouth, I undertake to prove either that they are romancers who seek to add an inch to their stature, or dull fellows who



placed their own interpretation on the lasty words he vouchsafed such chatterers. As a fact, the king, on that day, wishing to discuss with me the preparations for the queen's entry, bade me keep close to him, since he had more inclination for my company than the chase. But the crowd that attended him was so large, the day being fine and warm—and comprised, besides, so and warm—and comprised, besides, so many ladies, whose badinage and galety he could never forego—that I found him insensibly drawn from me. Far from being displeased, I was glad to see him forget the moodiness which had of late oppressed him; and beyond keeping within sight of him, gave up, for the time, all thought of affairs, and found in the beauty of the bright dresses and waving feathers of the speed at which the king; and of the speed at which th

to which the calls of duty had of late made me a stranger.

On a sudden a quarry was started, and the company, galloping off pell-mell, with a merry burst of music, were in a moment dispersed, some taking this track, and others that, through the rocks and debris that make that part of the forest difficult. Singling out the king, I kept as near him as possible until the chase led us into the Apremont coverts, where, the trees growing thickly, and the rides cut through them tening intricate, I caught sight of him flying down a ride bordered by dark green box-trees, against which his white hunting coat showed vividly, but now he was alone, coat showed vividly, but now he was alone, and riding in a direction which each mo-ment carried him farther from the line of the chase, and entangled him more deeply

in the forest.
Supposing that he had made a bad cast and was in error, I dashed the spurs into my horse, and galloped after him; then, finding that he still held his own, and that

my horse, and galloped after min, then, inding that he still held his own, and that I did not overtake him, but that, on the contrary, he was riding at the top of his speed, I called to him. "You are in error, sire, I think!" I cried. "The hounds are the other way!"

He heard, for he raised his hand, and without turning his head, made me a sign, but whether of assent or denial, I could not fell. And he still held on his course. Then, for a moment, I fancied that his horse had got the better of him, and was running away, but no sconer had the thought occurred to me than I saw that he was spurring it, and exciting it to its utmost speed, so that we reached the end of that ride, and rushed through another and still another, always making, I did not fail to note, for the most retired part of the forest.

We had proceeded in this way about a

other, always making, I did not fall to note, for the most retired part of the forest.

We had proceeded in this way about a mile, and the sound of the hunt had quite died away behind us, and I was beginning to chafe, as well as marvel, at conduct so singular, when, at last, I saw that he was slackening his pace. My horse, which was in the point of falling, began, in turn, to overhaul his, while I looked out with sharpened curiosity for the object of pursuit. I could see nothing, however, and no one, and had just satisfied myself that this was one of the droll freaks in which he would sometimes indulge, and that in a second or two he would turn and laugh at my discomfiture, when, on a sudden, with a final pull of the reins, he did turn, and showed me a face flushed with passion and chagrin.

I was so taken aback that I cried out.
"Mon Dieu! sire," I said. "What is it?
What is the matter?" What is the matter?"
"Matter enough!" he cried, with an oath.
And on that, halting his horse, he looked at me as if he would read my heart.
"Ventre de Saint Gris," he said, in a voice that made me tremble, "if I were sure that there was no mistake I would—I would have rea your face again!"

never see your face again!"

I uttered an exciamation.
"Have you not deceived me?" quoth he.
"Oh. sire, I am weary of these suspicions!" I answered, affecting an indifference I did not feel. "If your majesty does not."

not—"
But he cut me short. "Answer me!" he said, harshly, his mouth working in his beard and his eyes gleaming with excite-ment. "Have you not deceived me?"

"Yet you have told me day by day that Madame de Conde remained in Brussels?" "No, sire!" I said. "Certainly!"
"And you still say so?"

"Yes, madame," I answered. "He had a fancy to discuss affairs today, and we lost the hounds." "Together?"
"I had the honor, madame."

cried, impatiently.
"Madame de Conde?"
"Yes, Madame de Conde, or I am a

her?"
"No, sire," I said, inexpressibly alarmed—
I could take it for nothing but fantasy—"

aw no one."

"And I saw her as clearly as I see you,"
he answered. "She wore the yellow ostrich
feather she wore last year and rode her
favorite chestnut horse with a white stocking. But I could have sworn to her by her
figure alone; and she waved her hand to
me."

"But, sire, out of the many ladies riding

"But, sire, out of the many today—"
today—"
"There is no lady wearing a yellow feather," he answered, passionately. "And the horse! And I knew her, man! Besides, she waved to me! And for the others—why should they turn from the hunt and take to the woods?"

I could not answer this, but I looked at

I could not answer this, but I looked at

to the chase, as the day was still young.
"Mon Dieu, no!" he answered passionately. "I have other work to do. Hark ye, ly. "I have other work to do. Hain , M. le Duc, do you still think that she is in Brussels?"

Brussels?"
"I swear that she was there three days

ago, sire!"
"And you are not deceiving me? If it be so, God forgive you, for I shall not!"
"It is no trick of mine, sire," I answered

firmly.

"Trick!" he cried, with a flash of his eyes. "A trick, you say? No, ventre de Saint Gris! there is no man in France dare trick me so!"

I did not contradict him, the rather as

we were now close to the kennels, and I was anxious to allay his excitement; that

that lay in wait for us, and so

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.... gossip to which his early return must give rise. I hoped that at that hour he might enter unperceived, by way of the kennels and little staircase; but in this I was dis-

"You do not seem to have agreed very well!" she said, smiling.
"Madame," I answered bluntly, "his majesty has no more faithful servant; but we do not always agree."
She raised her hand, and, with a slight gesture, bade her ladies stand back, while her face lost its expression of good temper.

her face lost its expression of good temper and grew sharp and dark. "Was it about the Conde?" she said, in a low, grating

voice.

"No, madame," I answered; "it was about certain provisions. The king's ear had been grossly abused, and his majesty led to believe—"

"Faugh!" she cried, with a wave of contempt, "that is an old story! I am sick of it. Is she still at Brussels?"

"Still madame."

"Still, madame."

"Then see that she stops there!" her majesty retorted, with a meaning look.

And with that she dismissed me, and I went into the chateau. I proposed to rejoin the king; but, to my chagrin, I found when I reached the closet that he had already sent for Varennes and was shut; "Yes, Madame de Conde, or I am a mad-man!" Henry answered, speaking a little more moderately. "I saw her gallop out of the patch of rocks at the end of the Dor-moir-where the trees begin. She did not heed the line of the hounds, but turned straight down the boxwood ride; and after that led as I followed. Did you not see her?" when I reached the closet that he had al-ready sent for Varennes, and was shut up with him. I went back to my rooms, there-fore, and after changing my hunting suit and transacting some necessary business sat down to dinner with Nicholas, the sat down to dinner with Nicholas, the king's secretary, a man fond of the table, whom I ofter entertained. He kept me in talk until the afternoon was well advanced, and we were still at table when Maignan appeared and told me that the king had sent for me.
"I will go," I said, rising.
"He is with the queen, your excellency," he continued.

he continued.

This somewhat surprised me, but I This somewhat surprised me, but I thought no evil; and, finding one of the queen's Italian pages at the door watting to conduct me, I followed him across the court that lay between my lodgings and her apartments. Two or three of the king's gentlemen were in the ante room when I arrived, and Varennes, who was standing by one of the fireplaces toying with a hound, made me a face of dismay; he could not speak, owing to the company. Still this, in a degree, prepared me for the scene in the chamber, where I found the queen storming up and down the room, while the king, still in his hunting dress, sat on a low chair by the fire, apparently while the king, still in his hunting dress, sat on a low chair by the fire, apparently drying his boots. Mademolselle Galigal, the queen's waiting wcman, stood in the background; but more than this I had not time to observe, for, before I had reached the middle of the floor, the queen turned on me, and began to abuse me with a vehemence which fairly shocked me.

I could not answer this, but I looked at him in fear; for as it was impossible that the Princess de Conde could be here, I saw no alternative but to think him smitten with madness. The extravagance of the passion which he had entertained for her and the wrath into which the news of her flight with her young husband had thrown him, to say nothing of the depression under which he had since suffered, rendered the idea not so unlikely as it now seems. At any rate, I was driven for a moment to entertain it, and gazed at him in silence, a prey to the most dreadful apprehensions.

We stood in a narrow ride, bordered by evergreens, with which that part of the forest is planted, and but for the songs of the birds the stillness would have been "And you!" she cried, "who speak so slow, and look so solemn, and all the time do his dirty work, like the meanest cook, he has ennobled! It is well you are here!

evergreens, with which that part of the forest is planted, and but for the songs of the birds the stillness would have been alsolute. On a sudden the king removed his eyes from me, and, walking his horse a pace or two along the ride, uttered a cry of joy.

He pointed to the ground. "We are right!" he said. "There are her tracks! Come! We will evertike her yet!"

I looked and saw the fresh prints of a horse's shoes, and felt a great weight roll off my mind, for at least he had seen some one. I no longer hesitated to fall in with his humor, but, riding after him, kept at his elbow until he reached the end of the ride. Here, a vista opening right and left, and the ground being hard and free from tracks, we stood at a loss; until the king, whose eyesight was always of the keenest, uttered an exclamation and started from me at a gallop. he has ennobled! It is well you are here! Enfin, you are found out—you and your provisions! Your provisions of which you talked in the wood!"

"Mon Dieu!" the king groaned; "give me patience!"

"He has given me patience these ten years, sire!" she retorted passionately. "Patience to see myself flouted by your favorites, insulted and displaced and set aside! But this is too much! It was enough that you made yourself the laughing stock of France once with this madame! I will not have it again—no, though twenty of your counselors frown at me!"

"Your majesty seems displeased," I said. "But as I am quite in the dark—"

"Liar!" she cried, giving way to her fury. "When you were with her this morning!

"When you were with her this morning! When you saw her! When you stooped "Madame!" the king said sternly, "if you

uttered an exclamation and started from me at a gallop.

I followed more slowly, and saw him dismount and pick up a glove, which, even at that distance, he had discerned lying in the middle of one of the paths. He cried, with a flushed face, that it was Madame de Conde's, and added: "It has her perfume—her perfume, which no one else uses!" tlemen, not to traders of Florence!"
She sneered. "You think to wound me by that!" she cried, breathing quickly. "But I have my grandfather's blood in me, sire; and no King of France—"
"One King of France will presently make your uncle of that blood sing small!" the king answered viciously. "So much for that; and for the rest, sweetheart, softly, softly!"
"Oh!" she cried, "I will go; I will not stay to be outraged by that woman's presence!" I confess that this so staggered me that I confess that this so staggered me that I knew not what to think, but between sorrow at seeing my master so infatuated and tewilderment at a riddle that grew each moment more perplexing. I sat gaping at Henry like a man without counsel. However, at the moment, he needed none, but, getting to his saddle as quickly as he could, he began again to follow the tracks of the horsely feet which here were visible, the

he began again to follow the tracks of the horse's feet, which here were visible, the path running through a beech wood. The branches were still bare, and the shining trunks stood up like pillars, the ground about them being soft. We followed the prints through this wood for a mile and a half or more, and then, with a cry, the king darted from me, and, in an instant, was racing through the wood at break-neck speed.

I had a glimpse of a woman flying far ahead of us, and now hidden from us by the trunks and now disclosed; and could geven see enough to determine that she wore a yellow feather drooping from her hat, and the princess.

"Words!" she cried. "You have words enough! But get out of this, Master Grave-Airs, if you can! Did you or did you not tell me this morning that the Princess of Conde was in Brussels?"

"I did, madame."

"Although half an hour before you had seen her, you had talked with her, you had been with her in the forest?"

"But I had not madame!"

been with her in the forest?"
"But I had not, madame!"
"What?" she cried, staring at me, surprised doubtless that I had manifested no confusion. "Do you say that you did not see her?"
"I did not."
"Nor the king?"
"The king, madame, cannot have seen her this morning," I said, "because he is here and she is in Brussels."

"It was!" he said. "If not, why should she flee from us?"

To that, again, I had not a word to say, and for a moment we rode in silence. Observing, however, that this last turn had brought us far on the way home, I called the king's attention to this, but he had sunk into a fit of gloomy abstraction, and rode along with his eyes on the ground. We proceeded thus until the slender path we followed brought us into the great road that leads through the forest to the kennels and the new canal.

Here I asked him if he would not return to the chase, as the day was still young. and she is in Brussels.

and she is in Brussels."

"You persist in that?"

"Certainly!" I said. "Besides, madame," I continued, "I have no doubt that the king has given you his word—"

"His word is good for every one but his wife!" she answered bitterly. "And for yours, M. le Duc, I will show you what it is worth. Mademoiselle, call—"

"Nay, madame," I said, interrupting her with spirit, "if you are going to call your household to contradict me—" "But I am not!" she cried in a voice of triumph that for the moment disconcerted me. "Mademoiselle, send to M. de Bassompierre's lodgings, and bid him come to me!"
The king whistled softly, while I, who knew Bassompierre to be devoted to him, and to be, in spite of the levity to which his endless gallanties bore witness, a man of endless gallantries bore witness, a man of sense and judgment, prepared myself for a serlous struggle; judging that we were in the meshes of an intrigue, wherein it was impossible to say whether the queen figured as actor or dupe. The passion she evinced as she walked to and fro with clenched hands, or turned now and again to dart a flery glance at the Cordovan curtain that hid the door, was so natural to her character that I found myself leaning to the latter supposition. Still, in grave doubt what part Bassompierre was to play, I looked for his coming as anxiously as any one. And probably the king shared this feeling; but he affected indifference, and continued to sit over the fire with an air of mingled scorn and peevishness.

At length Bassomplerre entered, and, endless gallantries bore witness, a man of

air of mingled scorn and peevishness.

At length Bassomplerre entered, and, seeing the king, advanced with an open brow that persuaded me, at least, of his innocence. Attacked on the instant, however, by the queen, and taken by surprise, as it were, between two fires—though the king kept silence, and merely shrugged his shoulders—his countenance fell. He was at that time one of the handsomest gallants about the court, thirty years old, and the darling of women, but at this his aplomb failed him, and with it my heart sank also. "Answer, sir! answer!" the queen cried. "And without subterfuge! Who was it, sir, whom you saw come from the forest this morning?"

"If your majesty will—"
"It will permit you to answer," the queen "I saw his majesty return," he faltered

"I saw his emajesty return," he faltered — "ard M. de Sully."
"Before them! before them!"
"I may have been mistaken."
"Pooh, man!" the queen cried with biting contempt. "You have told it to half a dozen. Discretion comes a little late."
"Well, if you will, madame," he said, striving to assert himself, but cutting a poor figure, "I fancied that I saw Madame de Conde—"

enter unperceived, by way of the kennels and little staircase; but in this I was disappointed, the beauty of the day having tempted a number of ladies and others who had not hunted to the terrace by the canal; whence, walking up and down, their fans and petticoats fluttering in the sunshine, and their laughter and chatter filling the air, they were able to watch our approach at their leisure.

Unfortunately, Henry had no longer the patiet ce and self-control needful for such a rencontre. He dismounted with a dark and peevish air, and, heedless of the starting, bowing throng, strode up the steps. Two or three, who stood high in favor, put themselves forward to catch a smile or a word, but he vouchsafed neither. He walked through them with a sour air, and entered the chateau with a precipitation that left all tongues wagging.

To add to the misfortune, something—I forget what—detained me a moment, and that cost me dear. Before I could cross the "Come out of the wood ten minutes before the king?"
"It may have been twenty," he mut-But the queen cared no more for hlm. She turned, looking superb in her wrath, to the king. "Now, sir!" she said. "Am I to bear this?"

"Sweet!" the king said, governing his temper in a way that surprised me, "hear reason, and you shall have it in a word. How near was Bassompierre to the lady he

saw?"
"I was not within fifty paces of her!" the favorite cried eagerly.
"But others saw her!" the queen rejoined sharply. "Madame Paleotti, who was with

terrace, Concini, the Italian, came up, and, saluting me, said that the queen desired to speak to me.

"The queen?" I said, doubtfully, foreseeing trouble,
"She is waiting at the gate of the farther court," he answered politely, his keen black eyes reverting, with eager curlosity, to the door by which the king had disappeared.
I could not refuse, and went to her.
"The king has returned early, M. le Duc?" she said.

to assume, "for the present I am tired! If Madame de Conde is here, it will not be difficult to get further evidence of her presence. If she is at Brussels, that fact, too, you can ascertain. Do the one thing or the other, as you please; but, for today, I beg that you will excuse me." girl been doing?"

"And that," the queen cried shrilly—"that is to be—
"All, madame!" the king said sternly.
"Moreover, let me have no prating outside
this room. Grand master, I will trouble

you."
And with these words, uttered in a voice

And with these words, uttered in a voice that silenced even the angry woman before us, he signed to me to follow him, and went from the room, the first glance of his eye stilling the crowded ante-chamber, as if the shadow of death passed with him. I followed him to his closet; but, until he reached it, had no inkling of what was in his thoughts. Then he turned to me.

"Where is she?" he said sharply.

I stared at him a moment. "Pardon, sire!" I said, "Do you think that it was Madame de Conde?"

"Why not?"

"She is in Brussels."

"I tell you I saw her this morning!" he answered. "Go, learn all you can! Find her! find her! If she has returned, I will—God knows what I will do!" he cried in a voice shamefully broken. "Go; and send Varennes to me. I shall sup alone; let no one wait."

I would have remonstrated with him, but he was in no mood to bear it; and, sad at heart, I withdrew, feeling the perplexity which the situation caused me a less heavy burden than the pain with which I viewed the change that had of late come over my master, converting him from the gayest and most debonnaire of men into this morose and solitary dreamer. Here, had I felt any temptation to moralize on the tyranny of passion, was the occasion; but, as the farther I left the closet behind me the more instant became the crisis, the present soon reasserted its power. Reflecting that Henry, in this state of uncertainty, was capable of the wildest acts, and that tot less was to be feared from his imprudence than from the queen's resentment, I cudgeled my brains to explain the ren-



contre of the morning; but as the courier, whom I questioned, confirmed the report of my agents, and asseverated most confidently that he had left madame in Brussels, I was flung back on the alternative of an accidental resemblance. This, however, which stood for a time as the most probable solution, scarcely accounted for the woman's peculiar conduct, and quite fell to the ground when La Trape, making cautious inquiries, ascertained that no lady hunting that day had worn a yellow feather. Again, therefore, I found myself et a loss; and the dejection of the king and the queen's ill-temper giving rise to the wildest surmises, and threatening each hour to supply the gossips of the court with a startling scandal, the issue of which no one could foresee, I went so far as to take into my confidence MM. Epernon and Mcntbazon, but with no result.

Such being my state of mind, and such the suspense I suffered during two days, it may be imagined that M. Bassompierre was not more happy. Despairing of the king's favor, unless he could clear up the matter, and by the event justify his indiscretion, he became for those two days the wonder, and almost the terror, of the court. Ignorant of what he wanted, the courtiers found only insolence in his mysterious questions, and something prodigious in an activity which carried him in one day to Paris and back, and on the foliowing to every place in the vicinity where news of the fleeting beauty might by any possibility be gained; so that he far outstripped my agents, who were on the same quest. But though I had no mean opinion contre of the morning; but as the courier

possibility be gained; so that he far out-stripped my agents, who were on the same quest. But, though I had no mean opinion of his abilities, I hoped little from these exertions, and was proportionately pleased when, on the third day, he came to me with a radiant face and invited me to at-tend the queen that evening.

when, on the third day, he came to me with a radiant face and invited me to attend the queen that evening.

"The king will be there," he said, "and I rhall surprise you. But I will not tell you more. Come! and I promise to satisfy you."

And that was all he would say; so that, finding my questions useless and the man almost frantic with joy, I had to be content with it; and at the queen's hour that evening presented myself in her gallery, which proved to be unusually full.

Making my way toward her, in some doubt of my reception, I found my worst fears confirmed. She greeted me with a sneering face and was preparing, I am sure, to put some slight upon me—a matter wherein she could always count on the applause of her Italian servants—when the entrance of the king took her by surprise. He advanced up the gallery with a listless air, and after saluting her stood by one of the fireplaces talking to Epernon and La Force. The crowd was pretty dense by this time, and the hum of talk filled the room, when, on a sudden, a voice which I recognized as Bassompierre's was lifted above it. "Very well?" he cried, gaily, "then I appeal to her majesty. She shall decide, mademoiselle! No, no; I am not satisfied with your claim!"

The king looked that way with a frown, but the queen took the outburst in good part. "What is it, M. de Bassompierre?" she said. "What am I to decide?"

"Today in the forest I found a ring, madame," he answered, coming forward. "I told Mademoiselle de La Force of my discovery, and she now claims the ring."

"I once had a ring like it," cried mademoiselle, bushing and leaching.

"Your statemoiselie de La Force of my dis-covery, and she now claims the ring."

"I once had a ring like it," cried made-moiselle, blushing and laughing.

"A sapphire ring?" Bassompierre an-swered, holding his hand aloft.

"Yes "With three stones?"

"Precisely, mademoiselle!" he answered, bowing. "But the stones in this ring are not sapphires, nor are there three of them."

There was a great laugh at this, and the many acid year, withing the positions of the property of the property

There was a great laugh at this, and the queen said, very wittily, that as neither of the claimants could prove a right to the ring it must revert to the judge.
"In one moment your majesty shall at least see it," he answered. "But, first, has any one lost a ring? Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! Lost in the forest, within the last three days, a ring!"

Two or three, falling in with his humor, set up absurd claims! to it: but none could

Two or three, falling in with his humor, set up absurd claims to it; but none could describe the ring, and in the end he handed it to the queen. As He did so his eyes met mine and challenged my attention. I was prepared, therefore, for the cry of surprise which broke from the queen.

"Why, this is Caterina's!" she cried. "Where is the child?"

Some one pushed forward Mademoiselle Paleotti, sister-in-law to Madame Paleotti, the queen's first chamber woman. She was barely out of her teen's and fordinarily, was a pretty girl; but the moment I saw her dead-white face, framed in a circle of fluttering fans and pitliess, sparkling eyes, I discerned tragedy in the farce; and that M. de Bassompierre was acting in a drama to which only he and one other held the key. The contrast between the girl's blanched face and the beauty and giltter in the midst of which she stood struck others, so that, before another word was said, I caught the gasp of surprise that passed through the room; nor was I the only one who drew nearer.

"Why, girl," the queen said, "this is the ring I gave you on my birthday! When did you lose it? And why have you made a secret of it?"

Mademoiselle stood speechless, but madame, her sister-in-law, answered for her.

a secret of it?"

Mademoiselle stood speechless, but madame, her sister-in-law, answered for her.
"Doubtless she was afraid that your majesty would think her careless," she answered.

"I did not ask you!" the queen rejoined.
She spoke harshly and susplebusly look.

She spoke harshly and suspiciously, looking from the ring to the trembling girl. The silence was such that the chatter of the pages in the ante room could be heard. Still mademoiselle stood dumb and con-

founded.
"Well, what is the mystery?" the queen said, looking round with a little wonder.
"What is the matter? It is the ring. Why

"Perhaps mademoiselle is wondering where are the other things she left with it!" Bassompierre said in a silky tone. "The things she left at Pariot, the verderer's, when she dropped the ring. But she may free her mind; I have them here."
"What do you mean?" the queen said. "What things, monsieur? What has the girl been doing?"

"Only what many have done before her," "Only what many have done before her,"
Bassompierre answered, bowing to his unfortunate victim, who seemed to be paralyzed by terror: "Masquerading in other people's clothes. I propose, madame, that, for punishment, you order her to dress in them, that we may see what her taste is."

"I do not understand?" the queen said. "Your majesty will, if Mademoiselle Paleotti will consent to humor us."

At that the girl uttered a cry, and looked round the circle as if for a way of escape; but a court is a cruel place, in which the ugly or helpless find scant pity. A dozen voices begged the queen to Insist; and, amid laughter and loud jests, Bassompierre hastened to the door, and returned with an

hastened to the door, and returned with an

amid laughter and loud jests, Bassompierre hastened to the door, and returned with an armful of women's gear, surmounted by a wig and a feathered hat.

"It the queen will command mademoiselle to retire and put these on," he said, "I will undertake to show her something that will please her."

"Go!" said the queen.

But the girl at that flung herself on her knees before her, and, clinging to her skirts, burst into a flood of tears and prayers; while her sister-in-law stepped forward as if to second her, and cried out, in great excitement, that her majesty would not be so cruel as to—

"Holty, toity," said the queen, cutting her short very grimly. "What is all this? I tell the girl to put on a masquerade—which it seems that she has been keeping at some cottage—and you talk as if I were cutting off her head! It seems to me that she escapes very lightly! Go! go! and see, you, that you are arrayed in five minutes, or I will deal with you!"

"Perhaps Mademoiselle de La Force will go with her and see that nothing is omitted," Bassomplerre said with malice.

The laughter and applause with which this proposal was received took me by surprise, but later I learned that the two young women were rivals. "Yes, yes," the queen said. "Go, mademoiselle, and see that she does not keep us waiting."

Knowing what I did I had by this time a

queen said. "Go, mademoiselle, and see that she does not keep us waiting."

Knowing what I did I had by this time a fair idea of the discovery which Bassompierre had made, but the mass of courtiers and ladies round me, who had not this advantage, knew not what to expect—nor, especially, what part, M. Bassompierre had in the business—but made most diverting especially, what part, M. Bassompierre had in the business—but made most diverting suggestions, the majority favoring the opinion that Mademoiselle Paleotti had repulsed him, and that this was his way of avenging himself. A few of the ladies even taxed him with this, and tried, by random reproaches, to put him at least on his defense, but merrily refusing to be inveigled, he made to all the same answer—that when Mademoiselle Paleotti returned they would see. This served only to whet a curiosity already keen, insomuch that the door was watched by as many eyes as if a miracle had been promised, and even MM. Epernon and Vendome, leaving the king's side, pressed into the crowd that they might see the better. I took the opportunity of going to him, and, meeting his eyes as I did so, read in them a look of pain and distress. As I advanced he drew back a pace and signed to me to stand before him.

I had scarcely done so when the door opened and Mademoistle Paleotti release.

I had scarcely done so when the door opened and Mademoiselle Paleotti, pale, and supported on one side by her rival, appeared at it; but so wondrously transformed by a wig, hat and redingote that I scarcely knew her. At first, as she stood looking at the staring crowd, the impression made was simply one of bewilderment, so complete was the disguise. But Bassomplere did not long suffer her to stand so. Advancing to her side, his hat under his arm, he offered his hand.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "will you oblige me by walking as far as the end of the gallery with me?"

She compiled involuntarily, being almost urable to stand alone. But the two had not proceeded half way down the gallery before a low murmur began to be heard, that, growing quickly louder, culminated in an astonished cry of "Madame de Conde!"

M. Bassompierre dropped her hand with I had scarcely done so when the door

Madame de Conde!"

M. Bassompierre dropped her hand with a low bow, and turned to the queen. "Madame," he said, "this, I find, is the lady whom I saw on the terrace when Madame Paleotti wes so good as to invite me to walk or the Bois-le-Roi road. For the rest, your majesty may draw your conclusions."

It was easy to see that the queen had

It was easy to see that the queen had already drawn them; but for the moment the unfortunate girl was saved from her wrath. With a low cry, Mademoiselle Paleotti did that which she would have done a little before, had she been wise, and swconed on the floor.

I turned to look at the king, and found him gone. He had withdrawn unseen in the first confusion of the surprise; nor did I dare at once to interrupt him, or intrude on the strange mixture of regret and relief, wrath and longing, that probably possessed him in the silence of his closet. It was enough for me that the Italians plot had failed, and that the danger of a rupture between the king and queen. a rupture between the king and queen, which these miscreants desired, and I had felt to be so great and imminent was felt to be so great and imminent, was, for this time, overpast.

The Paleottis were punished, being sent

home in disgrace, and a penury, which, doubtless, they felt more keenly.

Deerfield's Human Lightning Rod.

From the Utica Observer.

Albert Lund is a carpenter and boards at the Union Hotel at Deerfield Corners. He was sitting on the hotel veranda when the storm came up last evening. After one of the flashes of lightning Lund tipped over in his chair and fell down like one dead. There were half a dozen people who witnessed the occurrence. When they picked him up Lund was unconscious. For fifteen minutes he was unable to speak. Peter Schultz, proprietor of the hotel, walked him around and resorted to various measures to bring the young man to his senses. His efforts were finally successful, and Lund was soon able to describe the sensations he had experienced. He said that they were not altogether unpleasant. The worst sensation was after the effects passed away. He felt sick at his stomach.

Twice before Lund has drawn in his direction electricity from the clouds, and he begins to think that he might properly be dubbed "the human lightning rod." On one of the previous occasions he was dumping a pail of milk into a can. He and the can were both knocked over. Another time he was so violently shaken that his garments were rent. There were half a dozen people who witgarments were rent.

The Modern Play.

From Harper's Bazar, "There," said the playwright. "That play is finished.

"Why, George, dear," said his 'you've only been at it ten minutes." "I know it, my dear, but it isn't part of my work to introduce the dances and com-ic songs. It's only three acts, you know." A Laggard in Prayer.

From Harper's Bazar. Papa-"Did you ask God to give

daily bread this morning?" Botby—"No, papa; I lcoked in the pantry ast night and saw that there was enough to last for three days."

Quick and Sure. From Truth.



Slob McGuirk-"Say, Skaggs, lend me yer gun—I want ter commit suicide."
Skaggs—"Naw!! d'ye think I want ter skaggs—"Naw!! dye think I want ter lose a good gun? Look at here! Dear easi-est an' cheapest ting fur you ter do is ter walk inter Duffy's saloon and say yer a dog catcher—see?" (The coroner's decision was instanta-neous death by shooting, stabbing and beating.) Highest of all in Leavening Power.-Latest U.S. Gov't Report

Al Baking Powder ABSOLUTELY PURE

THE BLOOMER QUESTION.

The Sharp Discussion Over the Bath-From the Philadelphia Press.

The bicycle costume of women is facing the struggle through which the female bathing costume passed twenty-five years ago.

Seaside bathing on any large, gregarious scale began after the war. It existed before. There was not much of it. When bathers began to multiply along the New Jersey coast women were wearing skirts which came below the knee and shapeless morstrosities in waists. It was impossible for any woman to swim or enjoy herself in

the masculine world (silliest of all on these matters)—have accommodated themselves to the shert skirts and exposed legs of the bathing dress.

On the bicycle, skirts are in the way. They are a nuisance. They catch on the wheels. They twist into the dust guards. They catch the wind and balloon into ugly shares. They worry nervous and sensitive women as to the precise exposure in progress about the boot tops. Occult tapes and bands are invented and advertised warranted to belay skirts and reef them down to proper behavior.

Elcomers and leggins are the next natural step. They provide a costume suited and seemly. Objection is made. So there was to the short bathing skirts. The new cestume is a shock. So was the old. It is the subject of urpleasant remark and some remarks which are worse than unpleasant. But it is right. It meets the needs of a new situation. Social conventions and the corventions of dress will accommodate themselves to the new costume just as they did to the bathing dress, and, as with skirts in the surf, five years from now the "ricest" and most fastidious will be wearing costumes at which the most daring now hesitate.

Even the leggins are an unnecessary concession to a foolish prejudice. In our summer climate they are hot and uncomfortable. They add cost. They wear out rapidly. Being conspicuous, they have to be kept in perfect order. They add one more risk, and no small one, and a loose strap or button may mean a serious fall. Why wear them? How altogether sensible the women are who are appearing on the bicycle with bloomers that come to the knee and stockings below.

Nor should one thing be forgotten. These charges are most easily made and made to the best purpose by those who enjoy a recgnized position in society. They owe a duty to all other women. There is none which such women should take more pains in meeting and discharging, just at present, than the adoption and wear of the only sensible costume on a bicycle—bloomers to the knee and stockings beyond.

sensible costume on a bicycle—the knee and stockings beyond.

NINETY MILES AN HOUR.

A New Style of Engine and What is Claimed for It. From the New York World.

There is now being built at the Bald-win locomotive works in Philadelphia an ordinary locomotive with driving wheels of five feet diameter, which, it is said, will as soon as completed draw a train of cars from Philadelphia to this city in an hour.

This claim is not made by the Baldwins. They have nothing to say on the subject. They are simply building the locomotive for private parties and are to receive their regular price of \$10,000 for it. When it is completed their part in the matter is ended. The sentlement in the matter is ended. The sentlement in the matter is ended. The sentlement is ended the regular price of \$10,000 for it. as soon as completed draw a train of cars from Philadelphia to this city in an hour. in the matter is ended. The who is paying for the locomotive is W. J. Holman of Minneapolis, an elderly inventor, who has been in the railroad business all his life and who has now invented something which, it is claimed, will completely revolutionize railroading.

ed something which, it is claimed, will completely revolutionize railroading.

It is not pretended that the ordinary \$10,000 locomotive which the Baldwins are building would, if set upon any railroad track, be able to travel ninety miles an hour. The locomotive is not, however, to be set on the rails as engines generally are. When it is completed it is to be placed on what are known as the Holman friction-geared trucks, which will raise it thirty inches above the surface of the rails. It will be just like any other locomotive except that each of its driving wheels will rest upon and between three other wheels that finally rest on the rails. The instant the drivers of the locomotive begin to turn they necessarily through friction give an opposite rotary motion to the small wheels upon which they bear, and these small wheels just as necessarily give a forward rotary motion to the third set of wheels upon which they are bearing. The natural and inevitable result is that one revolution of the locomotive's driving wheels, by this multiplicity of wheels in pyramid form, carries the locomotive forward just twice as far as a single revolution if the driving wheels be on the rails themselves. In other words, the speed of the engine, whatever that speed might be on the rails themselves, is exactly doubled by the use of this newly invented truck.

In an experiment which was made with

nvented truck.
In an experiment which was made with In an experiment which was made with an ordinary locomotive thus mounted in Minnesota, on a branch of the Northern Pacific railroad recently a speed of eighty miles was said to have been easily attained. The invention has been kept quiet, it being the purpose of those interested to say nothing about it until its practical utility was demonstrated by a run from Philadelphia to New York within an hour's time. That, it is believed by the inventor, will be the shortest and quickest way of letting the world know that a new marvel in mechanics has come into existence.

In addition to the increase of speed attainable, this new invention will, it is claimed, save millions of dollars through the diminished wear and tear upon the rails, for the weight of locomotives will then be further distributed along the track, and at no point of any rail will there be a pressure more than one-third as great as is now exerted by the driving wheels.

A-Hot Day.

From the Hartford Post. An old colored man sat on his front door-

step last evening, doing his best to keep cool. Chloe, his wife, was sitting near him, and said: "Say, Sambo, it's dun been a purty hot day, ain't it?" "Yas, Chloe, it dun has, an' I heard a gemman say dat it was 96 in de shade." "Why, what duz 96 in de shade mean?" "I dunno, just 96." "Oh, dere must be sumting more ob it dan dat." Sambo scratched his woolly pate for a few minutes, and then gave this very satisfactory explanation: "Well, honey, I jus' guess it must be dis way. You know when dey play sum of dose games dey say a man got so many out of a hundred. Now, I dun guess dat a hundred's just as hot as it can be, and de 96 today means dat we wuz only four points from being de hottest cool. Chloe, his wife, was sitting near

From Pick-Me-Up. Judge-"How old are you?" Elderly Female—"I am—I am—I am—"

Judge—"You'd better make haste; every
minute makes it worse."

wuz only four points from being de hottest we could be."

FOR RESULTS OF EXCESSES Use Housford's Acid Phosphate.
Dr. R. H., PEPPER, Huntington, W. Va., says:
"In nervous prostration from execesses, I find it par excellence." FLESHY WOMEN.

Some Suggestions Which May Tend to Reduce Rebellious Adipose From the New York Ledger.

There are a number of disadvantages which befall her who loses in middle life the lithe, agile, symmetrical figure of early womanhood. One of these is very patent to the eye of the observer, who sees a curve in the wrong place as the eye follows what should be a straight line from the bust to the floor. But greater than the consciousness of visible loss in symmetry is the growing sense of clumsiness and helpless ess that creeps over one as the accumulation of adipose, instead of being uni-

which came below the knee and shapless mostisties in waits. It was impossible for any woman to swim or enjoy herself in the surf with this clothing, and it added very seriously to the risks of bathing.

There was a great outery in the carry seventies, when daring young women who had been at Dieppe and Blarritz, on the French coast, shortened their skirts, cut their waists to fit, and, in general, reefed their bathing dresses in all directions. Exactly the same this subject of bloomers on bicycles. Good people objected to the short bathing dresses. "Nice people" hesitated about wearing them. The newspapers made fun of them.

In spite of all this, the short skirts won: They are seen on every beach. Every one wears them. All conventions are fully satesemily. They are graceful. A woman makes herself ridiculous if she wears anything close. The world, all worlds—the social, the religious, the feminine and even the masculine world (sillest of all on these matters)—have accommodated themselves to the short skirts and exposed legs of the bathing dress.

They are a nuisance. They catch on the wheels. They twist into the dust guards. They catch the wind and balloon into ugly shapes. The worry nervous and sensitive women as to the precise exposure in progress about the boot tops. Occult tapes and bands are invested and advertised and seemly. Objection is made. So there was to the short bathing skirts. The new costume is a shock. So was the old. It is the subject of urpleasant remark and some remarks which are worse than unpleasant and seemly. Objection is made. So there was to the short bathing skirts. The new costume is a shock. So was the old. It is the subject of urpleasant remark and some remarks which are worse than unpleasant and seemly. Objection is made. So there was to the short bathing skirts. The new costume is a shock. So was the old. It is the subject of urpleasant remark and some remarks which are worse than unpleasant and seemly. Objection is made. So there was to the short bathing skirts. The new cost of th

FOX RAISING IN ALASKA.

Hopeful of Realising Large Profits From the Sale of Many Pelts. From the Pittsburg Commercial Gazette.
Fox farming in Alaska, which has as

sumed immense proportions, was origi-nated by a Pittsburger. In 1879 George Wardman was traveling about the coast in the steamer Rush. He saw a valuable black fox skin sold for \$200, and conceived the notion that farming the fox would be profitable. He got Preach Taylor, Thomas F. Morgan and James C. Redpath interested and a company was formed. The gentlemen are agents of the Alaska Comm cial Company at St. George.

Morgan suggested as a place for the experiment the Semedies group of seventy rocky islets, sixty miles west of Kodiak, which produced nothing but sea birds and sea lions, and are uninhabited. At the

e natives killed the cubs by kind

some black fox cubs. He secured half a dozen, and while he was away on business the natives killed the cuos by kindness and by overfeeding them. No more of the cubs could be found, and no further effort to carry out the scheme was made until the summer of 1884, when about twenty blue fox cubs were caught. They were taken in a steamer to Unalaska and thence in a chartered schooner, with a quantity of seal meat, to the Semedies Islands, where they were released.

The islands are inaccessible except in calm weather, which helped the enterprise, as it kept poachers and Indians from catching the stock. At first it was difficult to get any right on the land. The Treasury Department, however, addressed a letter to revenue steamers and the provisional government of Alaska, to give their protection to the fox farmers under the law protecting squatters, and the company has not been molested in its enterprise.

The foxes eat eggs and catch birds in the summer. They are also adepts at killing sea lions, which serve them for food. They are very intelligent. They take the eggs in summer and hide them in the thick moss, which is like mattresses, and leave them until they get hungry in the winter and can find nothing else to eat. If they hid the eggs in the dirt they would be unable to scratch the frozen ground away from them in winter, hence the wisdom displeyed in covering them with moss. The foxes have been watched, during the months of July and August on the cliffs searching for eggs, and have been tracked to their hiding places.

The blue fox pelt is valued at \$15, and as seals become scarcer it becomes more valuable. All attempts to catch black foxes have proved failures, as they are so scarce. Natives are hired to live on the island and watch the foxes. The latter are trapped in certain seasons, killed, and skinned. The carcasses are valueless, as the Indians, who will eat almost anything, will not touch the fox meat. The number has multiplied from twenty cubs to about 5,000 foxes, and they have been trapped every seaso

It Was Different Then.

From the Indianapelis Journal. Mrs. Puttep-"John, don't you think it would do just as well for you to smoke cheaper clgars?" Mrs. Puttup's Husband-"Indeed! Before

you married me you said you thought a man should smoke the best cigars he could get."
Mrs. Puttup—"But I was not paying for them then."

The Reason. From the Chicago Record.

"Why is it that on the hottest day Wile kins never takes off his coat?" "Sh! His wife makes his shirts.

